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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3720  
INFO RUCNFUR/DARFUR COLLECTIVE  
RUEHGG/UN SECURITY COUNCIL COLLECTIVE  
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DEPT FOR SE GRATION, S/USSES, AF A A/S CARTER, AF/C  
NSC FOR MGAVIN AND CHUDSON  
DEPT PLS PASS USAID FOR AFR/SUDAN  
ADDIS ABABA ALSO FOR USAU

SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [ASEC](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KPKO](#) [SOCI](#) [AU](#) [UNSC](#) [SU](#)  
SUBJECT: A/S BOSWELL VISIT TO EL FASHER, APRIL 29

1. (SBU) Summary: The security situation in Darfur is relatively calm, but remains fluid and unpredictable, with ambushes, abductions, armed robbery and carjackings posing the most danger to Westerners according to what UN and international non-government organization (INGO) representatives told Assistant Secretary for Diplomatic Security Eric Boswell during an April 29 visit to El Fasher, North Darfur. They emphasized that overall security had deteriorated since the March 4 INGO expulsions and the corresponding increase in hostile rhetoric against Western assistance workers. During his visit, A/S Boswell also toured the UNAMID Supercamp and Nigerian Level II Hospital, as well as existing USG facilities in El Fasher. End Summary.

2. (SBU) A/S Boswell and Special Assistant Karen Lass arrived in El Fasher on April 29 accompanied by the DCM, RSO and USAID Mission Director. At UNAMID Headquarters in El Fasher, A/S Boswell had a courtesy call with UNAMID Force Commander General Martin Luther Agwai, who noted that fighting between Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) and rebels and inter-rebel fighting have virtually ceased since fighting occurred in Muhajeriya in January-February. "Banditry and criminality are currently our biggest challenge" to keeping peace in Darfur, he said. A/S Boswell was then briefed in detail on the security situation by UN Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) Officer Frazer King. The month of April was one of relative calm, but the situation remains fluid and unpredictable, according to King. Recurring trends include tensions between the SAF and non-signatory rebel movements; tribal clashes over grazing and water rights; the Chad-Sudan proxy war involving the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) and the Chadian Union des Forces de la Resistance (UFR); incidents targeting the UN and INGOs; banditry against civilian and internally displaced persons (IDP) populations; and a tense environment in IDP camps following the March 4 expulsion of 13 INGOs. Security personnel are currently most concerned about ambushes, abductions and kidnappings, armed robbery and carjackings, according to King. Kidnappings in particular are a major concern as they may proliferate as an alternative source of income to carjacking. At UNAMID Headquarters, A/S Boswell also toured the hybrid force's Nigerian Level II Hospital, and later in the day saw the sprawling UNAMID Sector North "Supercamp" currently under construction.

3. (SBU) Following his departure from UNAMID Headquarters, A/S Boswell had a courtesy call with the Wali (Governor) of North Darfur, Osman Mohamed Yousif Kibir, who greeted him cordially. A/S Boswell expressed his appreciation to the Wali for the support the GOS provides to USG personnel while in Darfur. He also remarked to the Wali the desire of the USG to establish a more secure platform for TDY personnel to spend time in El Fasher. Kibir welcomed the effort to establish such a facility, and emphasized to A/S Boswell that the time was ripe for the USG to advance the cause of peace in Darfur. "We have a local saying that a chance [like this] never comes twice," he said.

¶4. (SBU) Following the meeting at the Wali's office, A/S Boswell attended a UN Office of Coordination for Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) briefing and INGO roundtable with over a dozen representatives from INGOs and UN agencies to discuss security in the field. The group emphasized that security on the ground is not improving, and in fact, may be getting worse. Two recent kidnappings of international INGO staff in Darfur have changed the tenor of the working environment, they said, as has the hostile rhetoric and fallout from the expulsion of thirteen INGOs. INGO representatives also expressed frustration at the perceived lack of security information they receive from UNAMID and UNDSS, alleging that what they get is inadequate and provides little feedback, guidance or analysis. They did, however, compliment the quality and responsiveness of UNAMID medical care and evacuation, as well as UNAMID's quick response to compound break-ins and other security incidents in El Fasher town. Finally, A/S Boswell toured the US Embassy Green House and Blue House facilities, as well as separate USAID TDY work and living quarters on the other side of town.

¶5. (SBU) Comment: Even as the Darfur conflict winds down, insecurity is likely to be rampant in an area that has, for decades, been characterized by lawlessness. Given the scope of USG political and humanitarian engagement in Darfur, the lack of a secure platform for USG personnel there is untenable. While current USG facilities continue to house USG personnel for short periods, they remain largely inadequate despite incremental security upgrades. A secure platform is urgently needed given what will likely be a prolonged engagement in humanitarian relief and recovery activities as well as the Darfur peace process and, eventually, longer-term development initiatives.

FERNANDEZ